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TOSA and Taylor's Gift Foundation Partner to Bring Increased Emotional Support to Donor Families

-New Program Fills Gap for Families Whose Loved Ones Donate the Gift of Life -

San Antonio, Texas (April 25, 2022) – Taylor's Gift Foundation announced today during National Donate Life Month that Texas Organ Sharing Alliance (TOSA) has partnered with them to offer its new emotional support program, "Kindred Hearts" designed specifically for donor families.

"Our goal with the Kindred Hearts program is to fill in a gap for families of organ and tissue donors when it comes to emotional support," said Tara Storch, co-founder of Taylor's Gift Foundation. "We want to step into that space, providing donor families with caring support and also the ability to connect with people who have experienced similar emotional pain and trauma. We don't want financial constraints to ever be a reason that a donor family isn't able to get the emotional support they need, so all of our services have no fees."

Donor families from across the country who participate in the Taylor's Gift Kindred Hearts Program receive personal access to support groups and Caring Guides, trained to help them navigate through their grief journey.

The groups are offered both virtually and in-person for individual and family groups.

Twelve years ago, Storch and her husband, Todd, were searching for similar emotional support when they lost their oldest child, Taylor, in a tragic skiing accident. Taylor went on to become an organ donor, saving and improving the lives of five people. While this fact brought comfort to the Storches, it also surfaced many other emotions they weren't equipped to handle. Their own personal experience motivated them to create their nonprofit organization, Taylor's Gift Foundation, and subsequently, the Kindred Hearts Program.

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"The grief process is difficult and challenging for many donor families who often struggle with the unexpected loss of a loved one," said TOSA Donor Family Aftercare Manager Adriana Almanza. "TOSA is looking forward to being able to support the families of heroic organ donors with individualized support that Taylor's Gift and their Kindred Hearts Program provides. We know families will benefit from working with an organization led by a donor family who can relate to them."

Dr. Macey Levan, Associate Professor of Surgery and Population health for NYU Lagone Health and the Director of the Center for Surgical and Transplant Applied Research Qualitative Core, has been working with Taylor's Gift Foundation on the Kindred Hearts Program. Currently, she and her team are working on a pilot program and research study surrounding the program.

"Organ donation and transplantation can be difficult to understand, especially for a family suffering a traumatic loss. Our team of researchers is working on national efforts with Taylor's Gift Foundation's Kindred Hearts Program to improve the care of donor families by offering dedicated emotional support and improving the culture of organ donation in America. We know the Kindred Hearts Program can fill a community need that we have determined through our ongoing research," said Levan.

Taylor's Gift Foundation hopes to offer the Kindred Hearts Program to organ procurement organizations (OPOs) across the country, so that donor families have open access to the emotional support they so desperately need as they cope with such devastating loss.

"We know, from personal experience, that organ donation for a donor family is a mix of grief and gratitude," said Storch. "It's grief from the sudden loss mixed with the gratitude that your loved one was able to save lives. Taylor's Gift is honored to offer free emotional resources so that no donor family ever grieves alone.

For more information about Taylor's Gift Foundation, visit www.taylorsgift.org. For more information about TOSA, visit http://www.TOSA1.org/.

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About Taylor's Gift Foundation

Taylor's Gift Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that provides emotional support to organ donor families. Founded in 2010, Taylor's Gift has a long-standing history of helping individuals and families walk the path of grief. Led by a donor family, professionals, and trained volunteers, their programs provide a safe environment for families and individuals to express feelings and emotions and the opportunity to walk with others who are experiencing a grief journey similar to their own. In 2021, they launched the Kindred Hearts Program to help organ donor families receive emotional support. For more information, visit www.TaylorsGift.org.

About TOSA

Texas Organ Sharing Alliance (TOSA), founded in 1975, is one of 57 federally-designated Organ Procurement Organizations (OPOs) in the United States. TOSA is committed to a mission of saving lives through the power of organ donation by providing organ donation and recovery services to Central and South Texans wishing to donate, and to those waiting for a life-saving organ transplant. For more information, visit www.TOSA1.org.